

Games Hosts Must Have Clean Rights Record, Rights Group Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 25, 2013

The  Moscow Times

BERLIN — The new president of the International Olympic Committee, who will be elected next month, must ensure that future Games' hosts comply with human rights according to the Olympic charter, human rights organizations said Friday.

In a letter to the IOC presidential candidates, Human Rights Watch and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) asked for their views on human rights as criticism of Russia's new anti-gay law mounts just six months before the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

"With less than six months before the opening ceremony of the Sochi Winter Games, the Olympic Movement is facing a crisis over Russia's failure to respect the Olympic Charter in Sochi," Minky Worden, Human Rights Watch director of Global Initiatives at Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

"Just as the IOC assesses ice rinks and ski jumps, the new Olympics leader needs to press

Russia to repeal a discriminatory law and address human rights violations before the Sochi Games."

The letter, dated Aug. 2, invites the six presidential candidates to state their views on a number of issues including media freedom in the country, migrant workers' rights abuses, evictions and harassment of activists in the run-up to the Sochi Games.

Russia has also been in the firing line since passing the controversial law that prohibits the dissemination of information promoting homosexuality to minors.

There have also been calls to boycott the Games next year, while several athletes at the world athletics championships in Moscow earlier this month voiced their opposition to the legislation.

After demanding clarifications from Russia on the law, the IOC said Thursday that it had received "strong assurances" that the anti-gay law would not affect athletes or spectators at the Sochi Games. The IOC said Russia had committed to comply "strictly" with the Olympic Charter.

There are six candidates to replace outgoing IOC President Jacques Rogge at the vote on Sept. 10.

IOC Vice Presidents Thomas Bach from Germany and Singaporean Ng Ser Miang are running for the top job along with Puerto Rican banker Richard Carrion; international sports administrators Denis Oswald of Switzerland and CK Wu of Taiwan; and former pole vault champion Sergei Bubka of Ukraine.

The IOC will elect its new president at its session in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Sept. 10.

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